

Sponge

Where can you get the sponge?

The sponge will be available without a prescription at a variety of locations: drug stores, public health department clinics and Planned Parenthoods.

How the sponge works:

The Today® Sponge is a small, one-size, disposable (single use), over-the-counter method of birth control for women. It contains spermicide (a substance that kills sperm).

The Sponge is inserted into the vagina with the dimple side placed in front of the cervix as a barrier that keeps sperm from entering the uterus.

The smooth side of the sponge has a woven loop of polyester fabric that provides easy removal of the sponge.

How to use the sponge:

- Wash your hands.
- Remove the sponge from its package and moisten the sponge with tap water just before inserting it into the vagina. Gently squeeze to produce "suds" which will activate the spermicide and helps with insertion.
- Slide the sponge into the vagina along the back wall of the vagina until it rests against the cervix. The dimple side should be up against the cervix, with the loop away from the cervix.



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- Insert your finger into your vagina to check that it is in place.
- The sponge is effective immediately for up to 24 hours, no matter how many times intercourse happens.
- After intercourse, the sponge must be left in place for at least 6 hours before it is removed.
- To remove the sponge, grasp the loop on the sponge with one finger and gently pull.
- Check to be sure the sponge is in one piece; if it is torn, remove all pieces.
- Throw the sponge away (don't flush it!).

Effectiveness rates:

If a sponge is used every time of sexual intercourse and is always used the correct way (perfect use), the effectiveness rate is as high as 91%. Because women do not always use the sponge every time or it is put in incorrectly, the typical use effectiveness is 84% or lower; 20-40 women out of 100 could become pregnant within the first year of use.

Benefits of the sponge:

The sponge is an over-the-counter method and is available without a prescription. The sponge may be inserted many hours before sexual intercourse.

The sponge may be more comfortable for some women and may be left in place up to 24 hours.

Potential side effects or disadvantages:

Some people are allergic to the spermicide in the sponge. Some women who use the sponge report an increase of yeast infections. Planning ahead is required and you must be comfortable with inserting and removing the sponge. Consult a doctor or health care provider if you and/or your partner are allergic to sulfa drugs.

Potential risks:

Wearing the sponge for longer than 24 - 30 hours is not recommended because of the possible risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS).

Danger signs for TSS:

- Sudden high fever
- Vomiting, diarrhea
- Dizziness, faintness, weakness
- Sore throat, aching muscles and joints
- Rash (like a sunburn)